



**Ocoee River Recreation and Economic Development Fund Board  
Marking RFP Sub-Committee  
May 25, 2023, Meeting Minutes  
2:00 pm Eastern Time  
Hiwassee/Ocoee Rivers State Park Office  
404 Spring Creek Rd  
Delano, TN 37325**

**Voting Committee Members Present:** Angelo Giansante, Ryan Cooke, Keith Jenkins, Angie Arp, Melissa Woody

**Voting Board Members not present: None**

**Guests Present:** Julie Thorner, Tarryn Sanchez, Kim Moore, Gerald Marshall

**Review of Vendor Proposal:** Committee and Guests

The Sub-Committee met to hear the 2023-2024 strategic marketing road map for the new Ocoee River Tourism Project. This first year of this project is from April 2023 to April 2024. Julie Thorner with LiquidSpark, the holder of the Ocoee Marketing Contract, presented the marketing plan to the committee.

Julie noted the number one business goal for the marketing contract is to increase rafting numbers in the 2023 season through Ocoee River brand awareness marketing. She went on to explain the current Time to Raft campaign will be retired and a fresh new spin will be used. The goal is during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2023 is to launch an interim website that will allow the user to search multiple factors to see what outfitters will suit them. In addition, launch new social media accounts and conduct a consumer research project. In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2023, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the website content development will take place and the continuation of the consumer research. The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2024 will be the start of identifying the early seasons organic and paid campaign ideas. The targeted increase rate is 5% or more. Key performance indicators (KPI) were discussed. Tracking of the website and tags on social medial sites would give a good way of getting information for marketing.

Business goal number 2 is developing a new Ocoee River Tourism with new branding and website that promotes the Ocoee River corridor. There will be 1-, 2-, 3- & 4-day itinerary's created to show visitors what you can do in a 1, 2, 3 or 4 day stay of the area.

Business goal number 3 is to increase the Ocoee River rafting a region brand awareness. This would target visitors that live within 4 hours of this region. The option of getting a billboard would be possible, but it would be a huge chunk of the budget at about \$60,000. The focus of this goal is to portray the

lifestyle of the river – the nostalgia and history of it including the Olympics. Julie would reach out for digital coops with Tennessee tourism partners, this will most likely be part of the initiative in 2024.

Business goal number 4 is to launch the website with all rafting Outfitters along with all their products. There will be a photo shoot in July to capture content for the website. Julie stated her plan is to use the website to highlight the Ocoee River Corridor, not just the outfitters. The thought was to give guests a reason to stay in the area longer than to raft the river.

Business goal number 5 is to complete customer research to explore what is are the factors of coming to the Ocoee and going rafting.

- **Motion to approve the campaign that Julie Thorner presented.**
  - Motion by Ryan Cooke. Seconded by Keith Jenkins.
  - Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

**Discussion of Next Meeting:**

- The Committee agreed to meet on July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. eastern time to continue discussion of the Marketing RFP and Pro Forma Contract.

**Adjournment:**